

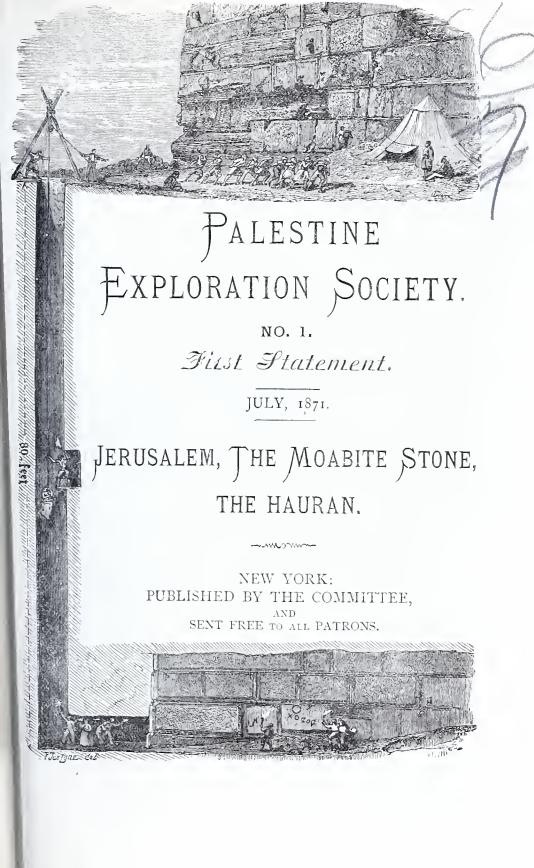
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STONE & THOMSON, 142 Fulton Street, New York.



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PALESTINE EXPLORATION SOCIETY.

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PALESTINE EXPLORATION SOCIETY.

AMERICAN EXPLORERS IN PALESTINE.

T.

The first impulse towards the exploration of Palestine, in recent times, was given by Dr. Edward Robinson in 1838. Dr. Robinson went through the Holy Land, not as a more traveler making notes of his passing observations, but as a student of Biblical History and Antiquities making researches upon a well-defined method, with the scientific motive of preparing a work on Biblical Geography. fitted himself for the journey by the special studies of fifteen years, had mastered the whole literature of his subject, and had mapped out distinctly the points of inquiry which previous travelers had left undeter-But he had also qualifications for his task such as are seldom combined in any one man; -a discriminating judgment, a retentive memory, comprehensive and well-digested knowledge, accurate powers of observation, the habit of patient and cautious investigation, and a rare faculty of common sense in sifting facts and weighing evidence. The most eminent geographers of Europe at once recognized the great value of Dr. Robinson's researches in a geographical point of view; but controversy was awakened by his opinion touching the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other places of reputed sanctity, and by his broad canon of historical research—"that all ecclesiastical tradition respecting the sacred places in and around Jerusalem and throughout Palestine is of no value, except so far as it is supported by circumstances known to us from the Scriptures, or from other contemporary history." Next to the testimony of the Scriptures and of Josephus, Dr. Robinson gave importance to the preservation of the ancient names of places among the common people. In this branch of inquiry he had the invaluable aid of Dr. Eli Smith, a master of the language and the character of the Arabs, and an acute and careful observer.

The researches of 1838 were followed by a second journey of Dr. Robinson in 1852. In the meantime the greater part of his identifications of disputed sites in Palestine and the region of Sinai had been accepted by travelers and scholars, and his estimate of tradition, though it disturbed many cherished associations, had come to be regarded as founded in reason. All subsequent writers upon the Holy Land who are entitled to any consideration have profited by Dr. Robinson's "Biblical Researches;" and these remain to this day the great storehouse of information upon the geography of Palestine—his projected work on the Physical and Historical Geography of the Holy Land not having been completed at the time of his death.

But Dr. Robinson was not equipped for a thoroughly-seientific exploration of the Holy Land. He went at his own charges, having but a single companion, with few instruments, and no trained assistants for a proper survey. He opened the way to a scientific exploration, provided sound instructions and positive data for others; but he himself reported that "there yet remained much land to be possessed."

In 1848, Lieutenant Lynch and his party made a scientific examination of the Dead Sea, so careful, thorough, and complete, that the official report of the United States Expedition under his command has become the standard authority upon that anomalous feature of Palestine.

The publication of "The Land and the Book," by Dr. W. M. Thomson, in 1859, while it added much to our knowledge of Biblical localities in Palestine, popularized the illustration of the Bible from the natural scenery and history of the Holy Land, and from the manners and customs of its inhabitants.

Dr. Barclay's "City of the Great King," published in 1858, made some substantial additions to our knowledge of the topography of Jerusalem; Mr. Osborn's "Palestine, Past and Present," 1859, was a contribution to the natural history and the cartography of the Holy Land; Professor Hackett's "Illustrations of Scripture," published in 1860, gave a life-like tone to many passages of the word of God from the natural phenomena and the social customs of Palestine; and other Americans, travelers and missionaries, have enriched our literature with journals, reports, and monographs upon the same fruitful theme.

We do not here speak of the obligations of Biblical seience to ex-

plorers from other nations,—English, French, German, Dutch, Russian,—who have followed in the path opened by Robinson; for the object of this brief paragraph is not to give a résumé of modern explorations in Palestine, but to recall Americans to their duty in a field where their own countrymen were pioneers, and where American scholarship and enterprise have won such distinguished merit. If of late years we have suffered France, Germany, and especially England, to lead us, their successes should stimulate us to an honorable rivalry for a precedence that was once fairly American.

The appeal lately made to the public spirit and national pride of Great Britain concerning maritime discovery and survey applies with equal force to Americans concerning explorations in the Holy Land. "We fear," says "Nature," "that if we do not bestir ourselves, the credit which has been won by British scientific enterprise will pass elsewhere. Having shown other nations the way to the treasures of knowledge which lie hid in the recesses of the ocean, we are falling from the van into the rear, and leaving our rivals to gather everything up. Is this fair to the eminent men who have freely given their best services to the nation, and obtained for it a glorious scientific victory? If their success is regarded by other countries as so distinguished that they are vieing with each other for a participation in it, surely we ought at least to hold our own."

THE ENGLISH PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

II.

"Early in the year 1864, the sanitary state of Jerusalem attracted considerable attention; that city which the Psalmist had described as beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth,—had become one of the most unhealthy places in the world; and the chief reasons assigned for this melancholy change were the inferior quality of the water, and the presence of an enormous mass of rubbish which had been accumulating for centuries. With the rubbish it was hardly possible to deal, but the water supply seemed an easier matter, and several schemes were proposed for improving it, either by repairing the ancient system, or by making new pools, cisterns, and aqueducts.

Before, however, any scheme could be earried out, it was necessary to obtain an accurate plan of the city; and, with this view, Miss Burdett Coutts, a lady ever ready to promote good works, placed a sum of £500 in the hands of a committee of gentlemen interested in Jerusalem. The Committee requested Lord de Grey, then Secretary of State for War, to allow a survey to be made by a party of Royal Engineers from the Ordnance Survey, under the direction of Sir Henry James, and obtained a favorable answer."*

Captain Wilson, R. E., was in command of this party, and performed with thoroughness and skill the particular task assigned to The opposition of the Turkish authorities frustrated his plan for improving the water supply of Jerusalem; but the discoveries of ancient ruins which he incidentally made while tracing out the aqueducts and cisterns of the times of Solomon and Hezekiah, awal:ened new zeal for the exploration of the old city, with a view to the settlement of disputed points of topography. Accordingly a society was formed in England, under the name of "The Palestine Exploration Fund," "for the accurate and systematic investigation of the Archæology, Topography, Geology, and Physical Geography, Natural History, Manners, and Customs of the Holy Land, for Biblical illustration." In 1867 a party was sent out, under command of Captain Warren, R. E., which remained in Palestine for three years, ehiefly occupied in and around Jerusalem. The reports and journals of Captain Warren, and other matters relating to the expedition were published in a series of Quarterly Statements, which are of great interest and value; and the general results of the three years have been embodied in an illustrated volume, called "The Recovery of Jerusalem."

Through the liberality of Messrs. D. Appleton & Company, to whose kindness we are indebted for several illustrations in this pamphlet, this volume will be furnished at the wholesale price to all patrons of the American Palestine Exploration Society who shall apply for it through the General Agent, Rev. J. A. Saxton, No. 34 St. Marks' Place, New York. A summary of the results of exploration in Jerusalem, prepared by Rev. W. I. Budington, D. D., is given under Section IV. of this pamphlet.

^{*} The Recovery of Jerusalem, p. 4

The Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund in England consists of the following persons, who, it will be seen, represent a wide range of religious belief, and of social position and influence:—

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THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION SOCIETY.

III.

In October, 1870, a large and influential meeting was held at the Madison Square Church, in New York, to receive from Rev. Henry Allon and Rev. James Mullens, D. D., of London, an account of the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund. These gentlemen, fully recognizing the honorable service heretofore rendered by Americans in the exploration of Palestine, and speaking in behalf of the English Committee, earnestly invited the co-operation of the people of the United States in the scientific and catholic measures of the English Society.

In response to this proposal, a Committee was appointed, with power to add to its number, to engage in the further exploration of Palestine, by such methods as should promise the best practical results.

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Secretary, Howard Crosby, D. D. { Chancellor of N. Y. University. Treasurer, James Stokes, Jr., Esq.

The following letter from the Archbishop of York will show how cordially this movement is welcomed in England;

Palestine Exploration Fund, No. 9 Pall Mall East, London, November 26, 1870.

Sir—The Committee of this Society have heard with great satisfaction that a fund is being formed in New York for the purposes of systematic Palestine Exploration. At the request of the Committee whose President I am, of this, the English Fund, I desire to express our cordial wishes that the two societies may heartily co-operate in this important work. It is with the greatest pleasure that we anticipate the working, side by side, of our two nations, to whom the Bible is especially dear, and to whom its words are familiar from the same translation. Our aim is nothing less than the collection and diffusion of every particle of information from the Lands of the Bible, yet remaining to be secured, which can throw light on the pages of the Sacred Book.

We are ourselves a body of men who hold widely different views on religious matters; but we are united by one bond of attachment to the Scriptures. I venture to express the hope that they will be also the great bond of union among the members of your Committee.

And with the prayer that our common efforts may lead to a wider knowledge of the Bible, and a deeper reverence for it, I remain, sir,

Most truly yours,

W. EBOR,

President of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

Rev. Jos. P. Thompson, D. D., Chairman, &c.

RECENT EXPLORATIONS IN JERUSALEM.

IV.

"Master see! what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"*
Surely it is not unworthy of Christian study to find out, if it be still possible, what those stones and buildings were. We are able to do it, to a greater degree than has been supposed, as the discoveries of the "Palestine Exploration Fund" show. These discoveries have been made at great cost of money and labor, and no little danger, by sinking shafts a hundred feet deep, and running galleries at right angles to these shafts, the explorers feeling their way under ground, burning magnesian wire, and so throwing light upon stones and pavements which have been buried 2,000 and 3,000 years from human sight. The results have been invaluable, because the least information upon such subjects is precious. Of these results we will mention some of the more prominent.

Let it be borne in mind at the outset that no city in the world has presented so difficult a problem as Jerusalem. The reason is, no city has been so often and so thoroughly destroyed. It has been captured, burned, overthrown, more than twenty times. Names and memories have perished, so that scarecly a feature of the natural landscape has been recognized beyond dispute. Mt. Moriah within the walls, and the Mt. of Olives outside, we are sure of. We thought we had certain knowledge of Mt. Zion also, but the most recent and successful explorers have east doubt even on this, and deny that the modern "Zion" corresponds with the ancient.

Mt. Moriah has been found to be a sharp erag or ridge, with so

^{*} See Illustration on p. 16.

little space upon the top as scarcely to afford room for a temple of small dimensions. On all sides it fell off rapidly and very steeply, except from north-west to south-east, the direction in which the ridge ran. The area on the summit was enlarged by walls built along the declivities, the outside wall deep down the valleys, from 100 to 150 feet below the area on which the temple buildings stood. One hundred feet again below this lay the original bed of the brook Kidron. The foundations of the temple, therefore, were 250 feet above the deep defiles around. This are a originally built by Solomon and enlarged by Herod, still exists, running on the south along the valley of Hinnom 1,000 feet, and along the Kidron 1,500 feet.

This inclosure was originally covered with splendid edifices. First were the porticoes, or covered walks, built along the outer walls, and overlooking the Kidron and Hinnom. They were magnificent structures, resembling the nave and aisles of Gothic cathedrals. The middle walk, or nave, was 45 feet broad, and the two aisles 30 feet. The aisles were 50 feet high, and the nave, rising like a cleve-story between the two, was more than 100 feet high. Add now terrace walls to the height of the porticoes, and we have a solid and continuous wall of masonry 250 feet high. But these were only the outer buildings of the temple area. The porticoes opened inwardly upon a court paved with marble, and open to the sky. Steps led up to a second court. Beyond this, again, through beautiful gateways was a third, and rising above them all was a fourth, in which stood the temple proper, ascending story above story, and said to have been 100 or even 150 feet high.

These horizontal measurements have been verified. Of course, we cannot vouch for the correctness of the reputed height of these immense structures. We have the less reason, however, to doubt the last, as we have established the first. If one looked upon Mt. Moriah from the Mt. of Olives opposite coming round the brow of Olivet on the way from Bethany, as our Lord did when beholding the city, it must have een a sight, which, for architectural beauty and grandeur, perhaps, has never been equaled, certainly not surpassed. It was an artificial mountain from the deep ravines below, wall, column, roof, pinnacle, culminating in the temple within and above all, and probably measuring between 500 and 600 feet.

The palace of Solomon, too, added to the impressiveness of the

sight. It is settled by recent discoveries that this pile of buildings was on the south-east corner of the area, joining on the House of the Lord above, and extending below to the king's gardens, where the two valleys met and "the waters of Siloah go softly."

James Fergusson, Esq., the distinguished architect, writes: "The triple temple of Jerusalem, the lower court standing on its magnificent terraces, the inner court raised on its platform in the centre, and the temple itself rising out of the group and crowning the whole,—must have formed, when combined with the beauty of the situation, one of the most splendid architectural combinations of the ancient world."

Josephus wrote: "If any one looked down from the top of the battlements he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth." This passed for foolish exaggeration till recent explorations vindicated the statement.

All these buildings, porticoes, columns, pinnacles, altar, and temple have perished. "Not one stone remains upon another which has not been thrown down." The area alone remains, and the massive substructures that for 3,000 years have been sleeping in their courses. The preservation has been due to the ruin. Buildings so vast have been toppled down the slopes of the Moriah that the original defiles and valleys have been almost obliterated. What had been regarded as the original surface has been found to be debris from 70 to 90 feet deep.

With piek-axe and shovel British explorers have been down to the original foundations. Fallen columns have been met with, and avoided, or a way blasted through them. The cinders of burnt Jerusalem have been cut through, and turned up to the light—rich moulds deposited by the treasures of Jewish pride. The seal of Haggai, in ancient Hebrew characters, was picked up out of the siftings of this deposit. The first courses of stones, deposited by Phenecian builders, have been reached, lying on the living rock. Quarry marks, put on in vermillion, have been copied—known to be quarry marks by the trickling drops of the paint, still visible—only they are above the letters, showing that when they were written the stones lay with the under side uppermost.*

At the southwest corner of the area, debris has accumulated to a

^{*} See the illustration on the title-page.

depth of not less than 125 feet—the accumulation of ages, made up of the ruins of successive Jerusalems; and here some of the most interesting discoveries have been made. Here is the famous Arch of Robinson, shown now to be an arch, as he conjectured, by the discovery of the pier upon which the first span rested. It is the remains of a bridge which crossed the valley on arches, and connected Mt. Moriah with the mountain opposite—the modern Zion. It is the skewback or abutment that slopes to receive the end of the arch. courses remain. The stones are 5 or 6 feet thick, and 20 or 25 feet long. The valley here is 350 feet wide, and this must have been the length of the bridge, connecting the Temple with the Royal Palace on the other side. At a depth of 30 feet a worn pavement was found, worn by feet that passed over it in our Lord's time. Lying on this pavement were the voussoirs, or wedge-like stones, belonging to the Breaking through this pavement, and through 24 fect of debris beneath, they found a still more ancient roadway, and resting upon this, the key-stones of a still more ancient bridge.

The explanation is probably reached; Robinson's Arch is the remains of the bridge that was standing at the siege of Jerusalem, upon which, at the eastern end of it, stood the Roman General Titus, holding a parley with the Jews, occupying the other end of the bridge. The older bridge, the remains of which were found beneath the pavement, belonged to the palmy days of Solomon; may have been standing at the time of the Queen of Sheba's visit; and possibly was part of the "ascent" by which Solomon went up into the House of the Lord, which, when the Queen saw, there was "no more spirit left in her."

The whole of Mount Moriah has been found to be fairly honeycombed with cisterns and passages. One of the cisterns, known as the Great Sea, would contain two millions of gallons, and altogether not less than ten millions. The wall of Ophel has been exposed—at the present time 70 feet high—though buried in debris; and the remains of towers and houses have been lighted upon, belonging to the age of the kings of Judah. The Pool of Bethesda has been, in all probability, identified; an intermitting fountain, which explains the popular legend of the troubling of the water by an angel. Under-ground passages, probably of the age of Hezekiah, when he stopped the brook that ran through the land, saying, "Why should the king of Assyria come and



find much water?" An iron ring still remains in the top of a shaft, from which hung the rope of the bucket to draw water with. Vaulted chambers there are, where evidently the besieged took refuge. They have left behind them lamps, and fuel, and cooking utensils. Channels, too, have been opened, down which the refuse of the altar, water, and the blood of the victim seem to have passed. The tracing of these channels will probably lead up to the identification of the exact spot where the Altar of Sacrifice stood. Such are some of the rewarding results of the explorations of Captain Warren at Jerusalem.

THE MOABITE STONE.

V.

The most exciting incident of recent explorations in Palestine was the discovery among the ruins of the ancient Dibon, east of the Dead Sea, of a stone in a perfect state of preservation, containing an inscription of 34 lines by Mesha, a king of Moab, a little after the time of Omri, king of Israel. In a quarrel of the Arabs over the possession of the stone, it was broken into fragments, and the inscription seriously impaired. Scribner's Monthly for April, 1871, contained a good representation of the stone as far as it has been restored. Through the courtesy of the publishers we are permitted to use their plate for the benefit of our readers;* the translation given is that of Christian D. Ginsburg, LL. D., according to his text, and Rev. Howard Crosby, D. D., has prepared the following statement of the import and value of the inscription:—

The Moabite Stone was a neatly-cut block of black basalt, 3 feet 8½ inches high, 2 feet 3½ inches wide, and 1 foot 1 78-100 inch thick, rounded at both ends, and inscribed with 34 straight lines of alphabetic writing.

It was found by Rev. F. A. Klein, August 19th, 1868, at the entrance of the ruined Moabitish town of Dibon, once a capital city of Moab (although built by the children of Gad, Num. xxxII, 34), and records the successful rebellion of Mesha, king of Moab, against the Israelitish yoke (see II. Kings, chap. III., 4), after a forty years' oppression by the house of Omri.

* We are indebted to Messrs. D. Appleton & Co., and Messrs. Thos. Nelson & Sons, for several illustrations in this pamphlet.

Although broken to pieces through Arabic jealousy, its inscription has been preserved, with the exception of about one-seventh; and two-thirds of the stone itself is now in the possession of M. Ganneau and the Palestine Exploration Society. This inscription is the oldest alphabetic inscription extant, dating about the year B. C., 890.

It shows us-

- 1. That Moab must have been independent between Solomon's reign and that of Omri. Under David and Solomon we know it was subject to Israel.
 - 2. That Dibon was its capital,
- 3. That the Semitic alphabet was the Phonician, which is our alphabet in its earlier forms. The letters A, N, K, M, O, U, D, T, L, H, R, are almost identical with the Roman and Greek characters.
- 4. That punctuation was carefully observed in old writings, so far as to separate by marks both words and sentences.
 - 5. That the plural in N is not a late form.
 - 6. That Moab was called by the Moabites, Mab or Meab.
- 7. That the name of Jehovah was openly spoken and known by nations around as the name of Israel's God, and that the pious horror of the Tetragrammaton did not exist nine centuries before Christ.
- 8. That Pliny's and Aristotle's views that only 16 or 18 letters were brought by Cadmus from the East into Greece, and that the Greeks invented the rest, are false, the whole twenty-two being here found. Hence the 119th Psalm, and the other alphabetic Psalms, and the Book of Lamentations (having an alphabetic division) are not to be deemed modern, as some would have them to be for this reason.

TRANSLATION OF THE INSCRIPTION ON THE MOABITE STONE.

- 1 I Mesha am son of Chemoshgad King of Moab, the
- 2 Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned
- 3 after my father. And I erected this Stone to Chemosh at Karcha [a Stone of]
- 4 [Sa]lvation, for he saved me from all despoilers and let me see my desire upon all my enemies,
- 5 and Om[r]i, King of Israel, who oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his

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- 6 [la]nd His son succeeded him, and he also said, I will oppress Moab. In my days he said, [Let us go]
- 7 and I will see my desire on him and his house, and Israel said, I shall destroy it for ever. Now Omri took the land
- 8 Medeba and occupied it [he and his son and his son's] son, forty years.

 And Chemosh [had mercy]
- 9 on it in my days; and I built Baal Meon, and made therein the ditch and I [built]
- 10 Kirjathaim. For the men of Gad dwelled in the land [Ataro]th from of old, and the K[ing of 1]srael fortified
- 11 A[t]aroth, and I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all the wa[rriors of]
- 12 the wall, for the well-pleasing of Chemosh and Moab; and I removed from it all the spoil, and [of-
- 13 fered] it before Chemosh in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men of Siran and the me[n of Zereth]
- 14 Shachar And Chemosh said to me Go take Nebo against Israel [And I]
- 15 went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn till noon and I took
- 16 it and slew in all seven thousand [men, but I did not kill the women
- 17 and maidens, for [1] devoted [them] to Ashtar-Chemosh; and I took from it
- 18 [the ves]sels of Jehovali and cast them down before Chemosh. And the King of Israel fortif[ied]
- 19 Jahaz, and occupied it, when he made war against me; and Chemosh drove him out before [me and]
- 20 i took from Moab two hundred men, all chiefs, and fought against Jahaz and took it,
- 21 in addition to Dibon—I built Karcha, the wall of the forest, and the wall
- 22 of the city, and I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof, and I
- 23 built the palace, and I made the prisons for the men of , . . with[in the]
- 24 wall. And there was no cistern within the wall in Karcha, and I said to all the people, Make for yourselves
- 25 every man a cistern in his house. And I dug the ditch for Karcha with the [chosen] men of
- 26 [1]srael. 1 built Aroer and 1 made the road across the Arnon,
- 27 I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was destroyed; I built Bezer, for it was cu[t down|

- 28 by the fifty m[en] of Dibon, for all Dibon was now loyal; and I sav[ed]
- 29 [from my enemies] Bikran, which I added to my land, and I bui[lt]
- 30 [Beth-Gamul], and Beth-Diblathaim, and Beth-Baal-Meon, and I placed there the Mo[abites]
- 31 [to take possession of] the land. And Horonaim . dwelt therein \dots
- 33 And Chemosh said to me, Go down, make war against Horonaim, and ta[ke it]
- 33 Chemosh in my days
- 34 year and I

PROPOSED EXPLORATION OF THE COUNTRIES ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE JORDAN.

VI.

Every member of the American Committee for this object has visited the Holy Land, and has, therefore, a personal enthusiasm in the work of exploration. One of the Committee, Prof. W. H. Thomson, M. D., a son of the Rev. W. M. Thomson, D. D., author of "The Land and the Book," is a native of Syria; and, being personally conversant with several important researches and discoveries in that country, furnishes us with the following description of the territory which has been proposed as the special field of exploration by the American Society, viz., the regions that lie to the east of the river Jordan:—

The small country of Palestine can be viewed in its whole extent from many places besides from the out-look of Pisgah. From the waters of the Dead Sea, at its southern extremity, one can distinguish the snows of Mt. Hermon as they rise above the ruins of Dan, the northernmost town of Israel. Nevertheless, in more senses than one Palestine can be viewed best from the direction whence the great Law-giver looked upon it. The whole current of Sacred History sets into Palestine from the east; and the relations which Israel had with Edom, Moab, Ammon, Bashan, and the Wilderness, from which they emerged as a new nation, render a thorough exploration of that extensive region almost essential to a right comprehension of some of the most important facts in human history.

This region, however, would prove of singular interest to the arch-

eologist, apart from its Biblical connections; for it is doubtful if any district of equal extent could be found in the world which so abounds in remarkable remains of ancient races. Its ruins are not only great in size, but unique in character. To the south, Petra exertes the wonder of the traveler, as he looks upon its collection of temples, public buildings, and private houses, not built, but carved out of the rock North of Edom are to be found literally scores of deserted cities, standing from century to century unchanged, owing to their having been constructed throughout of massive stones, which will endure as long as the rocks from which they were hewn. In many instances their builders seem to have been guided by the simple aim of indestructibility; so that not alone the ceilings, but the doors and window-shutters were made of heavy slabs, which still rest on their pivots. This feature, of course, lends an exceptional interest to the exploration of such a country, compared with other ancient lands whose cities have long since crumbled away into heaps or earth mounds.

It may sound paradoxical also to adduce as a fact, that the possession for many centuries of this district by lawless Arab tribes has greatly conduced to the preservation of its architectural remains. But it is nevertheless true, that in proportion as the districts which lic to the west of the Jordan have enjoyed periods of eivilization and prosperity, so as to build and enlarge their cities, they have invariably done so at the expense of the great structures belonging to the ages which preceded them. Thus we have seen the ruins of the Tyre, which Alexander destroyed, now contributing ship-loads of stone for the present growing city of Beyrout; and, as the Arab workmen were unearthing a vaulted passage, which, in all probability, had been entombed since the day of the Maccdonian assault, we saw plain indications that its stones had in their turn been removed from the more ancient Tyre on the mainland which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed. The great Roman walls in the ruins of Cesarea are a conglomerate of Phœnician materials from old Dor and Athleet. There is indeed searcely a large ruin in Syria now which does not prove, on examination, to be the ruin of more ancient ruins, whose ready-hewn stones were more convenient to use than would be the opening of new quarries. A single castle, crowning a lofty precipice in Lebanon, has towers of Canaanitish, Greek, Roman, Saraeenic, and Turkish builders, while an unequaled view can be enjoyed out of the

windows of a beautiful Gothic chapel built by the Crusaders on its top; but each new edition, so to speak, of that great fortress, obliterated much of what the archeologist would now wish had never been touched. But on the east of the Jordan the country has been progressively occupied by Arab tribes ever since the first centuries of the Christian era, until finally it has been utterly depopulated of builders for quite fifteen hundred years. Even during the most flourishing periods of the Caliphate, when fine Arab edifices were erected from the Ganges to the Pyrennees, yet the tent-loving Bedouins were left to occupy Gilead and Bashan, and such nomad tribes have no object to pull down solid walls for any of their purposes. Nor again, are the heavy stones of the ancient Amorite architects fit materials for the rude houses of the modern fellaheen who hold the few villages which are to be found in the district. Hence little, besides scarcely appreciable climatic agencies, has contributed to alter for centuries past the aspect of the ruins of Dibon, Heshbon, Edrei, Baal Meon, Rabbath Ammon, Bozrah, and other cities whose deserted houses still stand secure habitations for jackals, bats, and owls, as if specially preserved to illustrate the words of the Hebrew prophets.*

Starting at the most southern limits of our field, we pass from the rocky, ruin-strewed district of Edom into the borders of ancient Moab, which run along the east of the Dead Sea. The northern portion of this tract, now termed the Belka, is a high, diversified table-land, well watered and fertile, its hill-tops often covered with the picturesque Syrian oak. Along the brink of the Dead Sea up to the entrance of the Jordan, the mountains sink down steeply into the deepest chasm on the surface of the earth, with their sides so bare and rugged that they impart a stern and even savage aspect to the bed of that strange lake, whose waters can never find an outlet, and in which nothing living can exist. From this upper table-land, with its plains well adapted for flocks and herds, the heights about Jerusalem can be well seen, so that its general features bear out very fairly the fine conception of Bunyan, who rewards his faithful pilgrims, ere they descend to the narrow Jordan, with a halt in the pleasant land of Beulah, from whose mountains the shepherds pointed them to the heavenly city beyond the flood. number of streams cut their way down to the lake through great

^{*} See illustration on page 24.

RUINS OF BOZRAIL.

gorges, at the head of one of which, near the lower extremity of the Dead Sea, stood Kir, one of the ancient capitals of Moab, and now called Kerak. About twelve miles to the north of it are the ruins of Ar, or Rabbath Moab. Both these places, as well as many ruined sites in the neighborhood, though visited before by travelers, are yet not as well explored as could be wished, owing to the turbulent and suspicious character of their present inhabitants. North of this occurs the long deep gorge of the river Arnon, which separated Moab from Ammon, and which is often referred to in the earlier historical books of the Bible. Beyond it lie the remains of Aroer and Dibon, from the ruins of which last was brought the celebrated "Moabitish Stone," whose value has already been proved to be beyond that of any single inscription of antiquity. Between Arnon and the similar gorge of Meon further north, are to be found many important sites, such as Kedemoth, Bezer, Jahaz, and other places familiar to students of the Old Testament; while on the brink of a great precipice, above the steaming hot fountains of Kalhirrhoë, and facing the Dead Sea, is the lonely fortress of Machaerus. Here, in the midst of a scene of most remarkable natural desolation, John the Baptist was imprisoned till he met his death, and this fact affords a striking commentary on our Saviour's reply to the messengers which John sent, wherein he distinctly refers him for consolation and strength to the passage in Isaiah, chap. xxxv., which so beautifully changes the theme from the prophecy of desolation in chap. XXXIV. on that same land of Idumea and Bozrah.

Proceeding north from this gorge past the site of Baal Meon, from which it derives its name, we come to the extensive ruins of 'Amman, the Rabbath Ammon of the Bible, around which lies a district covered with ancient remains, some of which, doubtless, are of a date close upon the times of Moses himself. Here was the powerful Amorite kingdom of Sihon, whose capital, Heshbon, still retains its ancient name. To the south-west of it runs a range of mountains which there is little reason to doubt formed the heights of Nebo, and where it may be practicable for explorers to determine very closely the summit of Pisgah itself, from which the great prophet looked forth upon the land of Canaan.

North of this district we enter upon the beautiful Gilead of the Bible, about which cluster so many sacred associations from the days of Jephthah to those of David, and of Elijah, whose native home it was. The Gileadites always held a foremost place among the warriors and strong men of Israel. Their country may be considered a continuation of the Belka, which we have just referred to; and, along with Bashan on the north, was so well adapted for pasturage, that the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, besought Moses to grant it to them as their portion because they had much cattle. In parts rocky and rugged, with volcanic ridges irregularly traversing it, it may be described generally as a rich, well-watered upland, with numerous small plains, cut up by deep valleys, so as to afford abundant sites for fortifications and strongholds. These features have contributed to render it in all ages very difficult to conquer, and have fostered a brave and free spirit in its people.

Eastward and northward of this, the plains become more extensive and fertile, and, at the same time, the volcanic mountains, wilder and more imposing, till they break away into the vast desert which stretches to the Euphrates. This district bears in the Bible the familiar name of Bashan, now termed the Hauran, whose limits are ill-defined, but may be regarded as reaching nearly to the base of Mt. Hermon and the region of Damascus. The excellence of the soil is such as to give a pre-eminence at this day to the wheat of the Hauran over that of any region of Syria. Meantime, its pastures and its groves of oaks still bear out the Biblical fame of Bashan, though its plains are given up to the Bedouins, and its mountains to the most warlike and lawless population of the East. Nature seems to have fashioned the land for the special purpose of affording places of refuge for human ontlaws as well as for wild beasts. There is probably no other equally extensive district where volcanic action has thrown up rocks and formed crevices and difficult passages so fitted for a race of Ishmaclites as is the One such locality, which constituted a principal stronghold of Og, king of Bashan, whom Moses destroyed, is still famous throughout the East as the Lejah. It may be described as consisting of an extensive and rich plain, capable of sustaining a large population, but surrounded by a complete wall of volcanic rocks, so closely heaped together as to have been aptly compared to the waves of a great sea, instantaneously petrified. Here, amid the thickets of scrub-oak, and in the numerous caves formed by the tilted rocks, some 2,000 Druzes

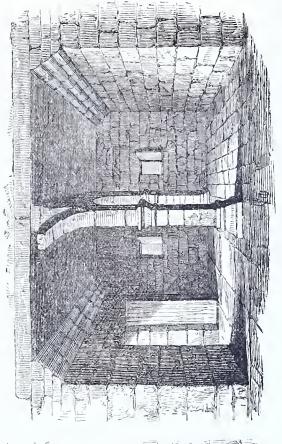
took refuge in 1838, and compelled Mohammed Ali to sacrifice 30,000 of his soldiers to bring them to terms.

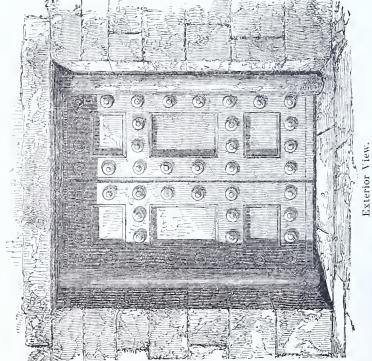
In the precarious and constantly hostile state of the ancient world, such a country as the Hauran would afford peculiar advantages to its inhabitants to maintain their independence. It had also the effect of rendering anything like general law or government impossible, except after long struggles, and then for brief intervals, during the sway of some great foreign empire. Each city or district, though flourishing in itself by reason of its rich soil, was yet at war with its neighbors. Hence, though the land is now covered with the ruins of those times, yet in most cases these remains indicate the work of a people whose thoughts were almost wholly bent on fortifying themselves. Their massive houses were literally so many private castles, with stone doors, stone windows, and stone ceilings, so that whole towns may be entered and occupied now, the houses erected centuries ago still standing as they were built.*

At certain periods, however, strong governments arose, which were able to reduce Bashan to something like a regulated province. The Syrian Kingdom of Damascus, followed by the Assyrians of Nineveh, appear to have held sway there; and then in after ages, the Greek dynasty of Antioch; and, lastly, the Roman. During these periods some of the Bashan citics became important centres, and constructed public edifices on a great scale. The ruins of these are now to be found in great abundance, mixed with the singular and stern architecture of earlier times. An historical student of this branch of art, therefore, could scarcely find a field so well worth his investigations as are presented by the contrasts between the Greco-Roman temples and theatres of Jerash (Gerasa), and Bozrah or Philipopolis, on the one hand, and the Amorite structures of Edrei, the capital of Og, or of Kenath, Salcah, and a great number of similar deserted towns.

Heretofore educated travelers have met with so many obstacles while passing through these districts that anything like an adequate exploration has been impracticable. Such a task requires both time and entire freedom of movement, but in most cases explorers have commanded neither the one or the other. The unreasoning jealousy

^{*} See illustration on page 28.





Interior View.

of the Arabs, who can scarcely be persuaded that the object of visiting old ruins, at great risk and expense, is not for the purpose of abstracting treasures hidden there; the habitually predatory character of the Bedouins of the plains, and their greed for tribute; and, lastly, the fanaticism of the Moslems in the villages, who hate the mere sight of a European, have each, in turn, compelled the explorer to forego nearly every advantage which his visit could afford. In illustration, we may refer to a district termed Es Safa, to the south-east of Damascus—a wild region, which, in most respects, is a reproduction of the Lejah in the Hauran. Here, also, ruins of an early date, similar to those in Bashan, are known to exist; and, according to the accounts of travelers who have penetrated to them, there are numerous inscriptions on the rocks, and on the buildings, which may prove to be of great historical value. It is surely time for the civilized world to investigate the many questions connected with these ancient Eastern countries. It is true that the discovery of ruins, however extensive, may nevertheless not carry us much beyond what we knew before; but the fluding of a single stone like that of King Mesha's inscription is worth to the modern world all the expense of the costliest expedition yet sent out for historical or an-Certain it is that an important chapter in the tiquarian research. world's history is yet but half written, -namely, the records of the first westward movements of the great races of men from the Euphrates valley, and their development by means of inventions in the arts of building, in the employment of metals, and, more than all, by the invention of writing. Each of these subjects we think very probably may be illustrated by a more complete knowledge of a land, which, without question, contains some of the oldest cities and oldest structures on the That this ancient country, so rich in objects of the highest interest, should still remain imperfectly explored, because it is occupied by a few lawless and ignorant inhabitants, is a reproach to European and American civilization, which could easily command, if it wished, acquiescence in more serious matters than a simple permission for an expedition to examine its ruins. The causes which have formerly prevented such a work are by no means insurmountable at present, for Christian power is felt now—even by the Bedouins—and every year is rendering it easier to deal with difficulties which thirty years ago would have appeared insurmountable.



INSCRIPTIONS DISCOVERED AT HAMATH IN NORTHERN SYRIA.

VII.

Through the kindness of J. Augustus Johnson, Esq., of New York, for many years Consul-General of the United States at Beyrout, in Syria, the Committee have been furnished with one of several interesting and important inscriptions copied by him at ancient Hamath. Mr. Johnson's paper, which we append below, very clearly illustrates, not only the value of his discoveries, but also what a great field awaits exploration in the valleys and plains of Northern Syria, as well as in the district east of the Jordan, to which attention has been just directed:—

"The discovery of the 'Moabite Stone' has stimulated the curiosity of Orientalists and Bible readers, and has naturally called the attention of explorers to the districts east of the Jordan. But there is another district, too long overlooked, which, it is believed, will repay a careful examination.

"Hamath, on the northern border of the 'Promised Land,' was the capital of a kingdom at the Exodus; its king, Toi, yielded allegiance to King David (2 Sam. viii., 9); it was called "great" by Amos (vi., 2), and was spoken of by an Assyrian monarch as among the most celebrated of his conquests (2 Kings, xviii., 34). It was originally the residence of Canaanites (Gen. x., 18), and is frequently mentioned as the extreme limit of the Holy Land towards the north. Hamath, as it is now called, has at present a population of about 30,000 inhabitants.

"While looking through the bazaar of this old town, in 1870, with Rev. S. Jessup, of the Syria Mission, we came upon a stone in the corner of a house which contained an inscription in unknown characters. We did not succeed in getting squeeze-impressions, for fanatical Moslems crowded upon us when we began to work upon the stone, and we were obliged to be content with such copies of this and other inscriptions subsequently found on stones over and near the city gate, and in the ancient bridge which spans the Orontes, as could be obtained by the aid of a native painter. In this we were greatly aided by Mr. Jessup, and by Mr. F. Bambino, of the French Consulate, who pronounced the copies to be accurate. Mr. Jessup endeavored to purchase

a blue stone containing two lines of these strange characters, but failed to obtain it because of the tradition connected with, and the income derived from it. Deformed persons were willing to pay for the privilege of lying upon it in the hope of a speedy cure, as it was believed to be efficacious in spinal diseases.*

"We should naturally expect to find in this vicinity some trace of the Assyrian and Egyptian conquerors who have ravaged the valley of the Orontes, and of their struggles with the Hittites on this ancient battle-field, and of Solomon, who built stone cities in Hamath (2 Chron. VIII., 4), of which Palmyra was one. But we find nothing of the Palmyrene on these stones. The arrow-headed characters are suggestive of Assournasirpal. In the inscription on the monolith of Nimroud, preserved in the British Museum, in relating his exploits 915, B. C., he says: 'In this time I took the environs of Mt. Lebanon. I went towards the great sea of Phænicia. * * * I received tributes from * * * Tyre, Sidon, &c. * * * They humbled themselves before me.' And a little later, 879-'8, B. C., Salmanazar V. says: 'In my 21st campaign I crossed the Euphrates for the 21st time; I marched towards the cities of Hazael, of Damascus. I received the tributes of Tyre, Sidon, and Gebal.'

"Until the interpretation of these mysterious characters shall be given, a wide field is open to conjecture. Alphabetic writing was in use 1,500, B. C., but the germs of the alphabetic system were found in the hicroglyphic and hieratic writing of the Egyptians, upwards of 2,000, B. C. Some of the attempts at picture-writing on these Hamath stones suggest the Egyptian system, which consists of a certain number of figures to express letters or syllables, and a vast number of ideographic or symbolic forms to represent words. Other characters represent Phænician letters and numerals not unlike the Phænician writing on the foundation stones of the Temple at Jerusalem, recently deciphered by Dr. Deutsch, of the British Museum.

"In framing their alphabet the Phenicians adopted the same process previously employed in the Egyptian phonetic system, by taking the first letter of the name of the object chosen to represent each sound; as, A, for aleph (a bull); B, for beth (a house); G, for ghimel (a camel);

^{*}A fac-simile of one of the inscriptions found upon the bridge is given on page 30.

in the same manner as the Egyptians represented A, by an eagle, akhem; M, by an owl, moulag, &c.

"Some scholars have designated Babylonia as the true mother of the characters employed in very ancient times in Syria and Mesopotamia. And it appears that besides the cuniform writing found on Assyrian and Babylonian monuments, a cursive character was also employed identical with the Phænician, and therefore possibly borrowed by the latter. Kenrick, however, remarks on this theory, that the occurrence of these characters only proves the intercourse between the two people. and not that the cuniform was the parent of the Phænician. We have in these inscriptions of Hamath a melange of all three, and perhaps a connecting link between the earliest systems. To suppose them to be bi-lingual or tri-lingual only increases the difficulty of interpretation in this case, for there is not enough of either to furnish a clue to the rest.

"The 'Carpentras Stone' contains an analogous inscription; it comes near to the Phœnician, and has been thought to present the most ancient specimen of the Aramean series. This and the Palmyrene writing form the links between the coin characters and the square characters, and are supposed to represent a language in a state of transition. That the Hebrews borrowed the use of writing from Mesopotamia or Phœnicia has been universally admitted; and, according to Gesenius, the old form of their writing was derived from the Phœnician, and retained by the Samaritans after the Jews had adopted another character of Aramaic origin.

"Now may it not be that in these Hamath inscriptions we have fallen upon a transition period, when the Phœnicians, or their predecessors in the land, were using the elements of writing then in existence, and before the regular and simple Phœnician alphabet had been perfected?

"The 'Carpentras Stone' has been considered by Gesenius to have been executed by a Syrian of the Seleucidian period. The 'Rosetta Stone' dates back to 193, B. C. The characters on these stones have much in common with those of Hamath. 'Champollion's Key to the Hieroglyphics,' will be of aid perhaps in solving the present mystery. But we shall be surprised if the incriptions of Hamath do not prove to be older and of greater interest than any recent discovery of Egypto-Aramean or hieroglyphic characters.

"Mr. E. H. Palmer, of the British Syrian Exploration Fund, saw

our copies at Beyrout, while on his way from an exploring tour in the Desert of Tih. He was so persuaded of their archæological importance. that he induced the British Society to send a learned Orientalist, Mr. Drake, to Syria, to obtain squeeze-impressions and photographs of all these and any other similar inscriptions. His report will be looked for with great interest. In the last number of the Journal of the American Oriental Society, it is stated that Mr. Palmer has already found in a Syrian MS. lying in the University of Cambridge, other copies of these Hamath inscriptions. They are said to be imperfect. We do not learn, however, that the Syrian MS. has been translated, or that any theory of interpretation has been advanced. Dr. Eisenlohr. Professor of Eygptology at the University of Heidelberg, in a letter asking permission to publish these inscriptions in Germany, says: 'Though I believe we are at present not able to give a translation of these inscriptions, I am still persuaded they will be of the highest interest for the scientific world, because they are a specimen of the tirst manner of writing of the people of that country.'

"These inscriptions, and the bas-reliefs on the monument called Kamua Hurmûl, in Cœlo Syria, near the source of the Orontes, and possibly of the same period, are an enigma, as yet, to the most learned Orientalists. It is to be hoped, however, now that attention is again called to the subject, that the clue may be found that shall unlock their meaning, and that Northern Syria will be no longer overlooked by the explorer.

CONCLUDING APPEAL.

VIII.

The work proposed by the Palestine Exploration Society appeals to the religious sentiment alike of the Christian and the Jew; it is of interest to the scholar in almost every branch of linguistic, historical, or physical investigation; but its supreme importance is for the illustration and defense of the Bible. Modern skepticism assails the Bible at the point of reality, the question of fact. Hence whatever goes to verify the Bible history as real, in time, place, and circumstances, is a refutation of unbelief. And, moreover, whatever serves to illustrate the Bible as a Book of realities, to make it real to the minds of youth in the family and the Sunday School, fortifies the rising generation against the assaults of skepticism in later

years. The Committee feel that they have in trust a sacred service for science and for religion; and they appeal with confidence to the intelligence and the faith of all who receive the religion of the Bible—whether in the form of Judaism or of Christianity—for the support of this enterprise.

Pastors to whom this pamphlet is sent are earnestly requested to give a lecture upon the subject, and take a collection to further the cause. A subscription of ten dollars constitutes one a Patron. But such contributions cannot be the main reliance in so great an undertaking; and the Committee appeal with confidence to gentlemen of wealth and liberality for subscriptions upou a scale commensurate with the importance of the object, and which will enable them to send out an exploring party in the early autumn.

The Rev. W. M. Thomson, D. D., of Beyrout, Syria, author of "The Land and the Book," expresses his views of the project in the following encouraging and emphatic terms:—

"Let the proposed field of exploration include the whole territory east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan valley. Also Hermon, the Lebanon, and the valleys and plains of Northern Syria.

"It would be best, I think, that the Expedition should begin operations at the south end of the land—say in January and February—and work up northward during the months of March, April, May, and June.

"For the exploration of the territories of ancient Eden and Moab, it would be desirable (if possible) for the Expedition to establish its first head-quarters at Kerak, south-east of the Dead Sea. The next station might be at Es Salt, to which they should find their way on the east side of the Dead Sea. From Es Salt they must zigzag through Gilead and Bashan into the east region of the Hauran. This is all hypothetical, and it may not be found possible to carry the scheme through in all its parts; but if it could be done, it would be from sheer incompetency in the personnel of the Expedition should the results not be a large and important contribution to Biblical science.

"For the success of the enterprise in all these regions, the Expedition should be backed up by the strongest Firmans that can be obtained from the Turkish government. There will be no difficulty in exploring the Lebanons and the surrounding regions; and this work can be carried on in the summer, or better still in the autumn: thus giving the Expedition nine or ten months to accomplish their explorations."

OBJECTS AND AIMS.

"1. Geographical and topographical, of course, and with special reference to Biblical history.

- "2. Archaelogical and architectural. The careful exploration and description of ruins, castles, temples, tombs, mounds, copying inscriptions, &c., in all languages.
- "3. Ethnological; especially a careful account of the various races and tribes, Christian, Moslem, Jewish, Druze, Kurds, and Bedouin; with their relations to the ancient inhabitants as far as it can be ascertained.
- "4. Manners, customs, laws, &c., social, domestic, civil, and religious; also the employments of the people, their agricultural, pastoral, and domestic implements, &c., &c.
- "5. Geology, mineralogy, botany, and natural history present large and deeply interesting fields for scientific investigation in all the regions contemplated in the Expedition.
- "6. Maps and charts, drawings, and photographical views. A noble field for valuable scientific work.

"There should be a sufficient number of scientific experts connected with the Expedition to secure accurate results in all the departments, and the duties of each should be clearly defined.

"Each of these co-laborers should make himself acquainted with what has already been achieved by others in his department, and as far as possible with what remains to be investigated. It is idle to expect valuable results without this previous reading. I myself have noted down in former years almost numberless sites in that large region which need to be identified, and scores of inscriptions which should be re-examined, verified, and copied.

" Λ first rate photographer with the best possible apparatus will be necessary, and at least one good draftsman.

"If anything is to be done, it should be entered upon without delay. They are moving in England to form a great Society to explore the whole of these regions, including the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and other lands connected with Biblical Archæology, &c. If Americans design to take an independent part in these novel modern enterprises, no time should be lost."

The English Fund will resume the work of exploration west of the Jordan early in the Autumn. Will not Americans furnish the means for an Expedition at the same time, to the eastern field, which by courtesy has been left to this Society?

Contributions may be sent to the Treasurer of the Committee,

James Stokes, Jr., No. 104 John st., N. Y. City.

PHOTOGRAPHS.

These are now 349 in number, many of them being of places never before taken. They include views of the ruins of Tel Hum (Capernaum), Kerazeh (Chorazin), Jerash (Gerasa), Kedes (Kedesh), and Sebastiyeh (Samaria); many points in and round Jerusalem, Hebron, Damascus, &c.; the district of Nablus, Gennesareth, &c.; and the cities east of Jordan.

A List of the Photographs may be had on application to he Secretary, Howard Crosby, D. D., Chancellor of the New York University.

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